"They won't be, granny, so long's you live, or so long's I live," the great sunbrowned boy assured her as he seized her in his arms. He pressed a kiss on her thin old cheek, placed her chair as if she had been a small child and went away to the field.

The old woman rose and watched after him.

"It ain't been a great while," she mused thoughtfully, "since Byron Theodore was in long cloes, an' I was kep' busy tryin' to keep him still. How time do fly!"

She sighed and looked across to the old log house among the orchard trees.

"And there's wher Byron Theodore an' Libby wants to begin life together. Well, I do hope they'll be as happy together as me an' John was. 'Twas jest about this time o' year when me an' him was married. Then the house was new and the trees was young and straight. I was a bride then, an' my land, but I was happy. I r'member the next mornin' after we was married John got up an' went to the door, an' he says, 'Come here, Lizzybeth, an' see the bloom o' the orchard trees. And smell 'em. Um-m! We're pore, rale pore, but I reckon they ain't a millynare no place that can 'ford to let his wife live in p'fumery like I can.' Then he ketched me up in his arms an' says, 'Look out there, Lizzybeth; there's a bee a-lookin' fer honey. He do be thinkin' you're a apple blossom, and I d'clare you do look like one, all pink an' white.' Them was happy days. But they're gone, an' I'm a old, woreout woman, an' the house is old, and the trees is old an' bent an' crooked. An' John, my John still, is waitin' fer me. I'd like to see John mighty well, I would. But I'm past seventy now, so it won't be long, I reckon."

She dried her eyes on her apron and sat down. Then she smiled.

"I'm goin' to do my best to have Byron Theodore and Libby as happy as we was, anyhow."

When Byron Theodore went back to his work that morning he worked with a will. He whistled and sang like the healthy, hearty boy that he was. It was only to his immediate family that he was Byron Theodore Lonsberry. His mother, who had read some, had given him this name, in opposition to his father's wishes, when he was a tiny mite three days old.

"Sech a big name for sech a little feller," his father had said, regarding the squirming little boy with pity.

But the child was so named, and so called, until he strated to school. The school-teacher asked him his name, and being very bashful, he had answered her in a very low tone. Three times he repeated it, and when the young teacher finally understood, she looked at him thoughtfully for a moment, then wrote the name down.

But his schoolmates would have none of it; and three days later had re-christened this snub-nosed, red-cheeked boy. And his name was Barndoor. Even the teacher called him by that name finally, though his mother and grandmother made special calls at the schoolhouse to argue the matter.

Byron Theodore fought with some of the boys near his own size, but finally found that he must kneel to the inevitable.

When the subject of Barndoor's marriage was brought up, there was a disturbance in the Lonsberry family. But finally, finding the young man so determined, and that Grandmother Beck was upholding him, they gave in. There was no objection, especially, to Libby. Barndoor's youthfulness and lack of worldly goods were the stumbling blocks.

But Grandmother Beck assured her daughter and son-in-law that, if nothing happened, Barndoor would get older. And, as for the other objection, she produced a certain gray sock, which contained more than they had supposed.

She counted part of it out carefully and one fine day she went to Five Points, where she purchased a good cook stove and some kitchen utensils, a table and some chairs.

They resurrected an old fashioned bed, hung some curtains, and Libby, with her own hands, scrubbed floors and woodwork until they were clean indeed. What if the floors were bare! They were clean and cool. And this was only spring. A carpet could be made before winter set in.

Then, one sunshiny day, between milking times, the "Baptis'" minister came to the Lonsberry home and performed a marriage ceremony. And every one was merry and gay, and a dinner was served in great style, a dinner which the "Babtis'" minister did not soon forget, as Grandmother helped prepare it, and she had been known in the past as the best cook in the county. Nor had she forgotten how, and, being happy, and wishing to make others so, she fairly outdid herself that day.

When the dinner was over Libby exchanged her white dress for a dark calico one, and fell to washing dishes with a vim. There is little time to waste on a dairy farm. But she sang as she worked.

Barndoor watched her flit about for a time, then went to do the chores.

He was happy, very happy. When he saw Libby run along the orchard path to their own little nest, he was happier still. But there was something lacking. Weren't things a little prosy? Too matter of fact?

It worried him and he ceased to whistle and went about his work absent-mindedly. Finally his brow cleared, he gave a whoop which scared a flock of hens clean out of their wits, threw his hat high in the air, and went into the shed.

He drew the dairy wagon to the barnyard pump and scrubbed it thoroughly, inside and out. The name "Ferndale Dairy" stood out in bold relief, and Barndoor eyed it admiringly.

The next morning he rose and hurried to the milking sheds: His father and mother were already there at work. He joined theme with a will.

After breakfast and when the milk had been strained and bottled, Barndoor said gleefully:

"Libby, slip your weddin' finery on right quick. I'll git into my best duds as quick as I can."

Libby looked at him in wonder, but did as she was told. When she had dressed and come to the door, Barndoor was waiting with the clean dairy wagon. He helped her in.

"What we goin' to do, Barndoor?" she asked timidly.

"Goin' on a weddin' trip," he answered triumphantly, breaking off a great spray of apple blossoms and placing them in her lap.

As they passed the door of the "new house," Grandmother Beck appeared. She jerked her apron from her waist and waved it at them.

Just as the long rays of red and gold streamed out across the sky they drove into the town. Everything was quiet, as it was still early. Barndoor had one arm around Libby and held her hand. The horse jogged along the well-known road; there was no need of a driver's hand.

The wagon rattled along merrily, a soft breeze was blowing, the air was sweet with plum blossoms. Ah, how how happy they were, these two!

Libby sat in the wagon while Barndoor delivered the milk from place to place. When this was done, he drove to the hitching place and fastened the horses.

Then, as proud a man as ever walked the main street of Five Points, Barndoor led Libby, whose hand trembled in his and whose cheeks were like roses, to the bakery, to the Homestead Bakery, where he ordered two sandwiches (which were dry), two cups of coffee (which were tasteless) and some doughnuts (which were stale). But, partaken of in the glamour of the bakery at Five Points, on the wedding journey, they were like unto nectar and ambrosia.

Then, having bought five cents' worth of candy and the same amount of peanuts, both of which Barndoor gave into Libby's keeping, they drove home.

The meadow larks called loud and clear and the sun shone brightly. Libby sang from pure joyousness.

Then she paused and whispered:

"I'm so much obliged fer the weddin' trip, Barndoor. It's the first—I mean, I mean it's the only one I ever had. An' it was such a s'prise."

She slipped her hand in his and looked into his face.

He looked at her for an instant, then gathered her up in his arms. His eyes were full of tears.

"What, what you cryin' 'bout, Barndoor?" she asked anxiously.

"Jest happy, little girl. Mos' too happy, I'm 'fraid. I'll allus be good to you, allus," he murmured fervently.

# The Gentleman and the Frill

By E. CLAYTON McCANTS.

THE winter was past, the wind was in the south, the bees were at work, and an odor of apple blossoms was abroad in the balmy air. In compliment to the bright spring weather the windows of the house at the corner of the street were open, and into those windows there drifted the sounds of the outside world—the low hum of stirring insects, the raucous squabblings of the many sparrows in the street, and the musical love-notes of the pair of catbirds who were building a nest in the quince bushes by the garden fence.

At the end window of the house—the one that faces away from the cross street and commands a view of the diminutive orchard where the fruit trees on this day seemed lost in a billowy, pink-and-white cloud of blossoms—The Girl sat before her sewing machine, now working the treadle with a brief and furious energy, now stopping to look at the other girl and to air her grievances; for she had long ago shut her eyes to the beauty of the world, and she refused to listen to the plaints of the sparrows because she had troubles of her own.

"I just don't care!" she finally remarked, with an emphatic rod of her pretty head, "it is The Gentleman's fault, anyhow. He—he is so unreasonable!"

The other girl raised her eyebrows. For an hour it had been evident to her that trouble was in the air, but The Gentleman was not her "gentleman," so she felt that the quarrel was none of hers. Still, now that the matter had been approached directly, she could not withhold a show of interest.

"And so he's going to-day?" she asked suggestively.

The Girl shrugged her shapely shoulders. Yes—and he doesn't need to go until to-morrow afternoon. For my part, I don't see why he should go even then." She clipped her words short and set the machine whirring again.

Before her, filling the "leaf" of the machine and overflowing upon the floor, were multitudinous folds of delicate-hued woven stuff, and on the table at her side were other breadths of the same, together with odds and ends of silk and ribbon, and a great yellow pile of tissue-paper patterns.

While The Girl sped the machine the other girl came over to the table, took one of the pieces of paper, spread it out on the stuff and pinned it. Then she stepped back and looked at the effect, holding her head sidewise and considering. To the uninitiated masculine the paper might have stood for anything from a Russian war map to a Standard Oil rate sheet, but the eyes of the other girl saw therein the plans and specifications of a gown.

"O Polly!" she exclaimed, a little twinge of delicious envy taking hold of her soul, "it's going to be a beauty—and that wide ruffled frill at the bottom of the skirt is the darlingest part of it!"

The Girl stopped the machine and rested her chin on her hands. "It's lovely," she admitted. "And to think that The Gentleman asked me to give it all up—the dress, and the party, and my week-old engagement with Harry White—just because he is going away and wanted me this last night all to himself."

The other girl looked properly surprised and sympathetically outraged. Then, with the consciousness of superior virtue, she raised her eyes heavenward.

"Thank goodness!" she exclaimed, self-righteously, "I'm not engaged!"

The Girl dropped her eyes. "I'm not, either," she remarked; "that is, not now." The "now" sounded depressed and a tiny bit tremulous.

The other girl looked up—here was a sensation.

"What?" she interrogated sharply.

The Girl's face gathered color. "Yes," she asserted, recklessly. "I can be as obstinate as The Gentleman can. I told him that I was going to the dance to-night, and that he must wait over and see me to-morrow night; that if his business is of more importance than I am, why" She hesitated. "He has decided not to stay," she added, decisively.

The other girl looked grave. "He can't stay, Polly," she urged. "I heard him say that he could not. They've wired for him."

The Girl tipped her chin into the air. "It doesn't matter now," she said. "It is settled once and for all." Then her lofty indignation deserted her and her voice fell. "He might have—" she began, but broke off suddenly, turned to the machine and set it whirring again.

The other girl looked troubled; then, as a step sounded on the front walk, she went to the window and peeped out.

"Why," she exclaimed, with some relief in her tones, "here's The Gentleman himself!" After which she gathered up sundry of her belongings and vanished discreetly from the room.

The Girl heard a quick, heavy footfall, but she pretended not to notice, and the machine went faster than before.

"May I come in?"

She could not evade the issue, so she turned to face The Gentleman.

"If you like," she replied, quite frigidly.

The Gentleman, looking a little downcast, stepped forward, bearing a suitcase in his hand.

"I—I was on my way to the station," he hesitated, "and I saw you at the window here—"

"You have a pleasant day for your journey," The Girl interrupted, hastily.

The Gentleman ignored her remark, but cast about for some explanation of his presence there.

"I have a photograph of you," he continued, a trifle lugubriously. "I wish to know if I may keep it, or whether it is your wish that I—"

The Girl averted her face. "You must return it, of course," she said, quite evenly.

The Gentleman flushed. "Certainly," he replied. "I—"

He lost the remainder of his remark by fingering nervously at the fastenings of the suit-case. When he had opened this he spread the sides recklessly, dug out a lot of brown paper parcels, and finally drew forth a linen envelope. This he handed to The Girl, and, with a swift, unseeing movement, he swept the ruck of his own belongings back into the case again. The Girl fingered the envelope, looking down at her feet the while.

When The Gentleman had rebuckled the last strap he extended his hand.

"I may never see you again, dear," he began.

The Girl caught up the dress on the machine as a drowning man grasps at a straw.

"I am going to wear this to-night," she said, with a rush; "isn't it pretty? Oh-h, good-by! Wish you a pleasant journey, I'm sure!"

The Gentleman went out, bumping the suit-case savagely against every convenient obstacle. The Girl dropped down beside the machine and hid her face in her arms.

After a little space the other girl looked in at the door. "Polly!" she called.

The Girl sat up suddenly and began to sew again. The other girl came up behind her and laid her hand on her arm.

"Is it all right, Polly?" she asked.

The Girl did not answer. "I don't believe I am going to like this dress," she presently announced, apropos of nothing at all.

The other girl looked concerned. "Why, I am sure—" she began.

The Girl snapped a thread and tumbled the cloth about. Then she stood up.

"The frill?" she explained. "Have you seen the frill?"

The other girl rummaged solicitously through the litter that cumbered the table. "Before I went out," she remarked, "it was lying just here."

The Girl stooped and peered behind the machine, then straightened herself and shook out a shimmering length of skirt. "Now wherever?" she inquired, querulously.

Suddenly she dropped the garment in a heap and turned to the other girl a pair of brown eyes that were damp and suspiciously red.

"Let the frill go," she said with unnecessary emphasis. "I hate the old dress; I hate dances; and, anyhow, I'm not going to-night!"

The other girl touched her on the cheek. "You're dead tired, Polly," she said, judicially. "You go right upstairs and rest."

The Girl plodded up the stairs wearily. Now that The Gentleman was irrevocably gone, she discovered, quite humanly, that she wanted The Gentleman above all else in the world. From the lower floor came the hum of the sewing machine—the other girl was using it now—and from the window of her chamber she could see the orchard and the narrow white path along which The Gentleman had been used to approach. Without warning, an inexplicable desire arose to dress herself becomingly and go thither and walk along the path.

For a while she resisted the temptation. Out of the purple-hilled west a breeze was blowing, bringing with it a tang of the fields and an odor of the blossoming hedge-roses that grow by the country roads. Softly, lest the other girl should hear, she arose and went down and slipped out.

In the diminutive orchard the apple trees greeted her with a shower of petals and the bees sang a monotonous song to her as they came and went busily. She seated herself upon a little rustic bench. How unreasonable she had been, to be sure. Of course business matters were imperative, and she felt in her heart that she herself would have thought less highly of The Gentleman had he yielded to her childish whim.

And yet, if he need not go until to-morrow, why should he leave to-day? With a woman's inconsequence she ignored the fact that their quarrel had rendered his further stay a thing undesirable. Petulantly she dug into the soft earth with the point of her parasol. Beyond the garden fence a thrush was singing, overhead a hummingbird hung on vibrant wings regarding her curiously.

Suddenly away across the town, she heard the rush and the roar of a passing train. He was gone, then. Her eyes filled, and all the world swam mistily.

She had started to her room when a footstep sounded on the gravel behind her.

"You!" she ejaculated, turning.

The Gentleman bowed very stiffly. "I—I— Inadvertently, I got among my packages a piece of your cloth—a—a frill, I think—" he stammered. Then his eyes met hers. "Why!" he exclaimed. "Why, sweetheart—"

When he had got her safely in his arms she upturned her face to his. "I'm so glad," she murmured, "that you cared to—to bring the frill."

The other girl looked out of the window. "At least I'm sane," she asserted loftily.